



INSTITUTE *for*
RESEARCH *on*
POVERTY

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Children of Incarcerated Parents

EMPOWER-MKE Citizen Advocacy & Resource Summit

July 17, 2018

Lonnie Berger, IRP Director & Professor of Social Work
Mike Light, IRP Affiliate & Associate Professor of Sociology

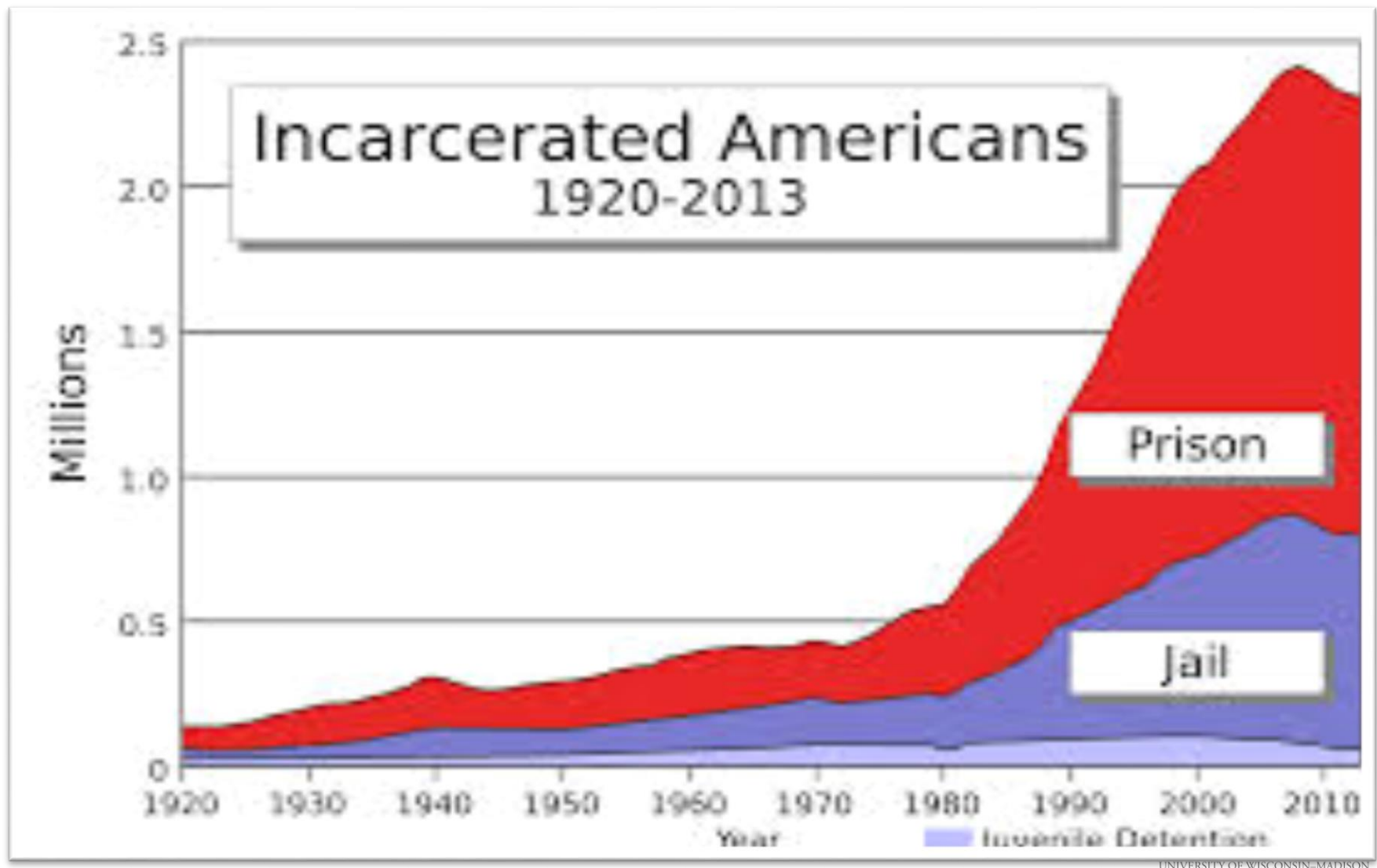
General Outline

- Context Setting
 - Growth and Scope of Penal System
 - Consequences for
 - Families
 - Kids
 - Communities
 - Milwaukee's Experience
- Analysis: Interactions with Child Welfare
- Discussion

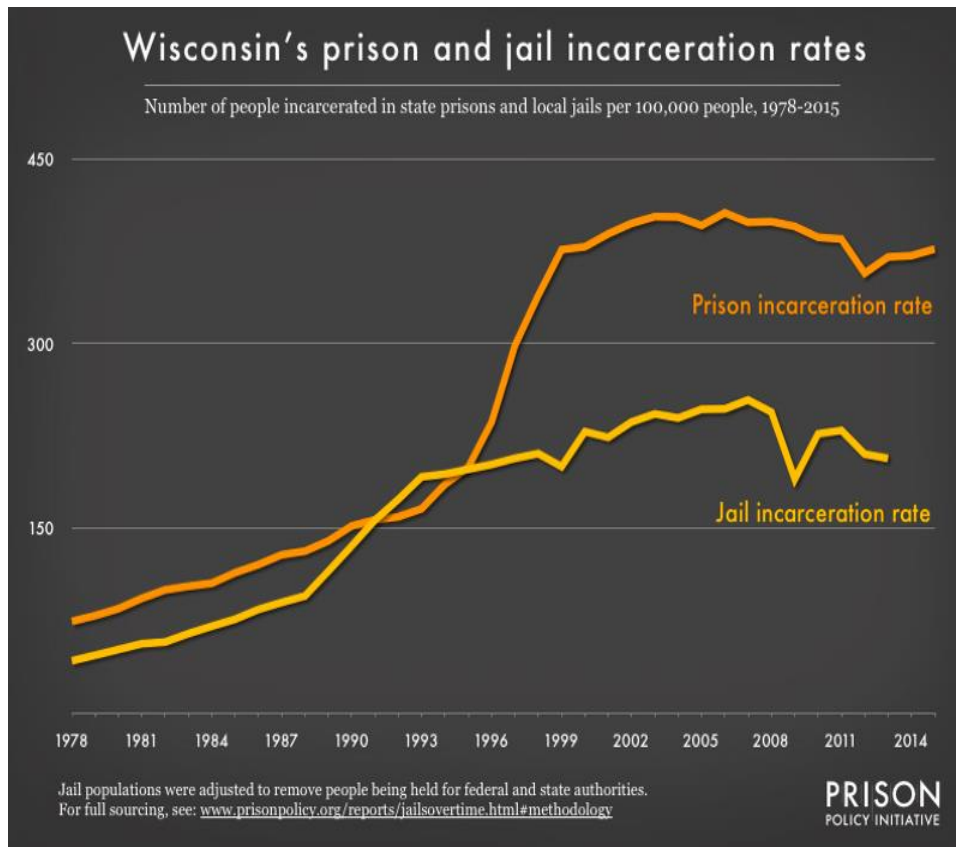
Growth & Scope

- Penal system has emerged as a social institution
 - Approximately 1 in every 100 adults incarcerated
 - Disproportionately poor, urban, minority men
 - Equivalent to all students in the UW System, Big 10, Pac-12, Big East, SEC, ACC, Big 12, Ivy League
- Growth began around early/mid-1980s
 - Federal system: population up over 700%
 - State systems: variation, but up over 400-500%
 - “Swelling” of different populations
 - Prisoners, felons, ex-felons

Timing/Expansion

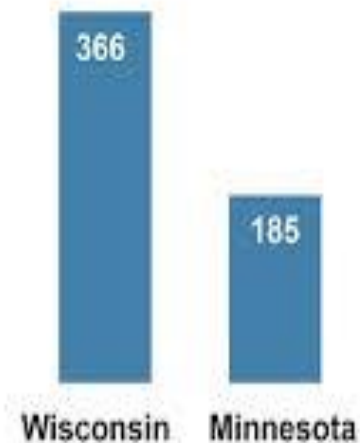


Wisconsin Started Later



Wisconsin's Incarceration Rate is Double that of Minnesota

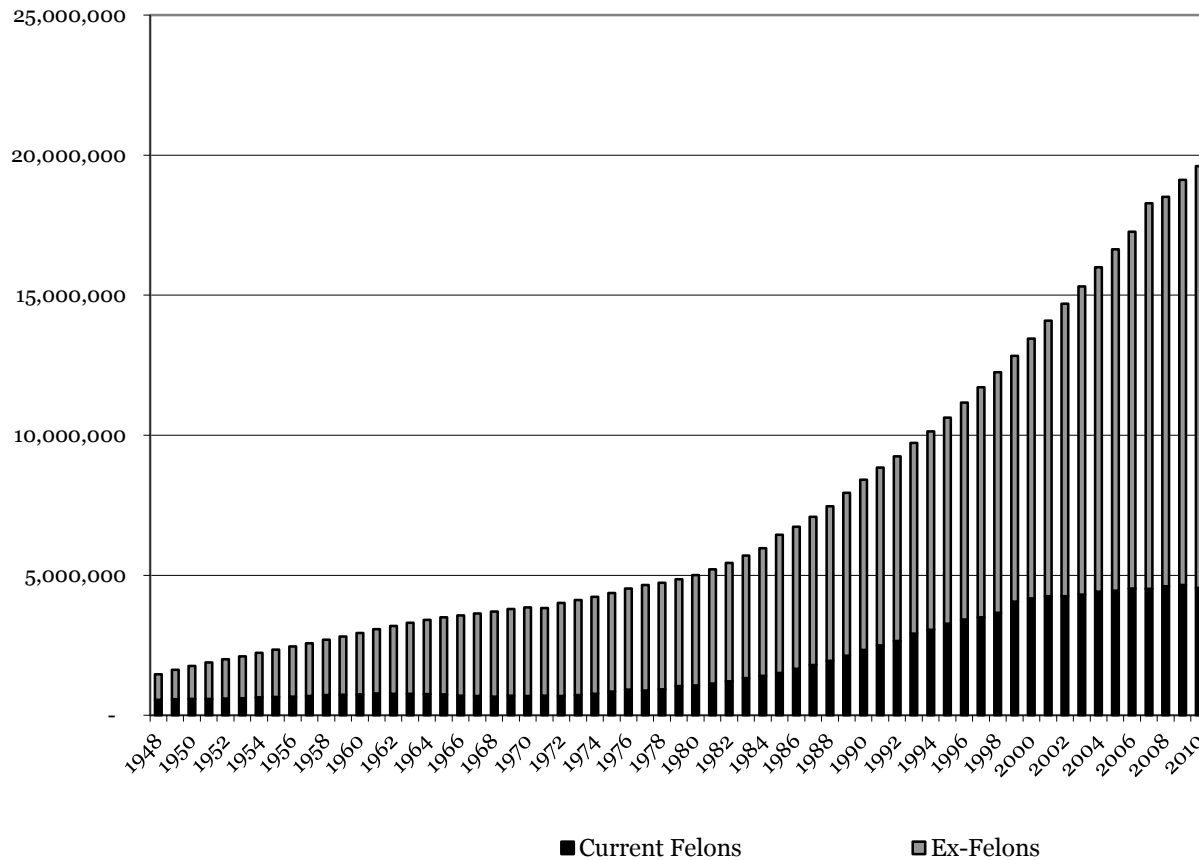
2010 Incarceration Rate per 100,000 Residents



SOURCE: Statehealthfacts.org

Wisconsin Budget Project

Total Felons & Ex-Felons

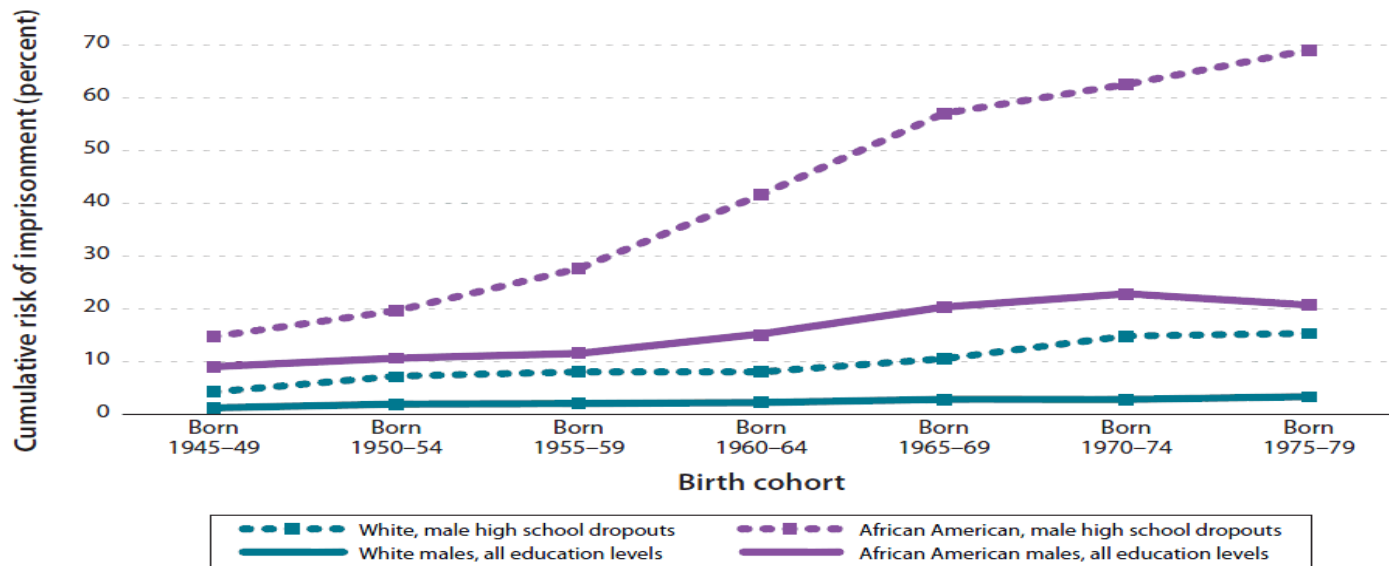


Men: Add Disadvantage ?

FIGURE 7.

Cumulative Risk of Imprisonment by Age 30–34 for Men Born Between 1945–49 and 1975–79, by Race and Education

Among men born between 1975 and 1979, an African American high school dropout has nearly a 70 percent chance of being imprisoned by his mid-thirties.

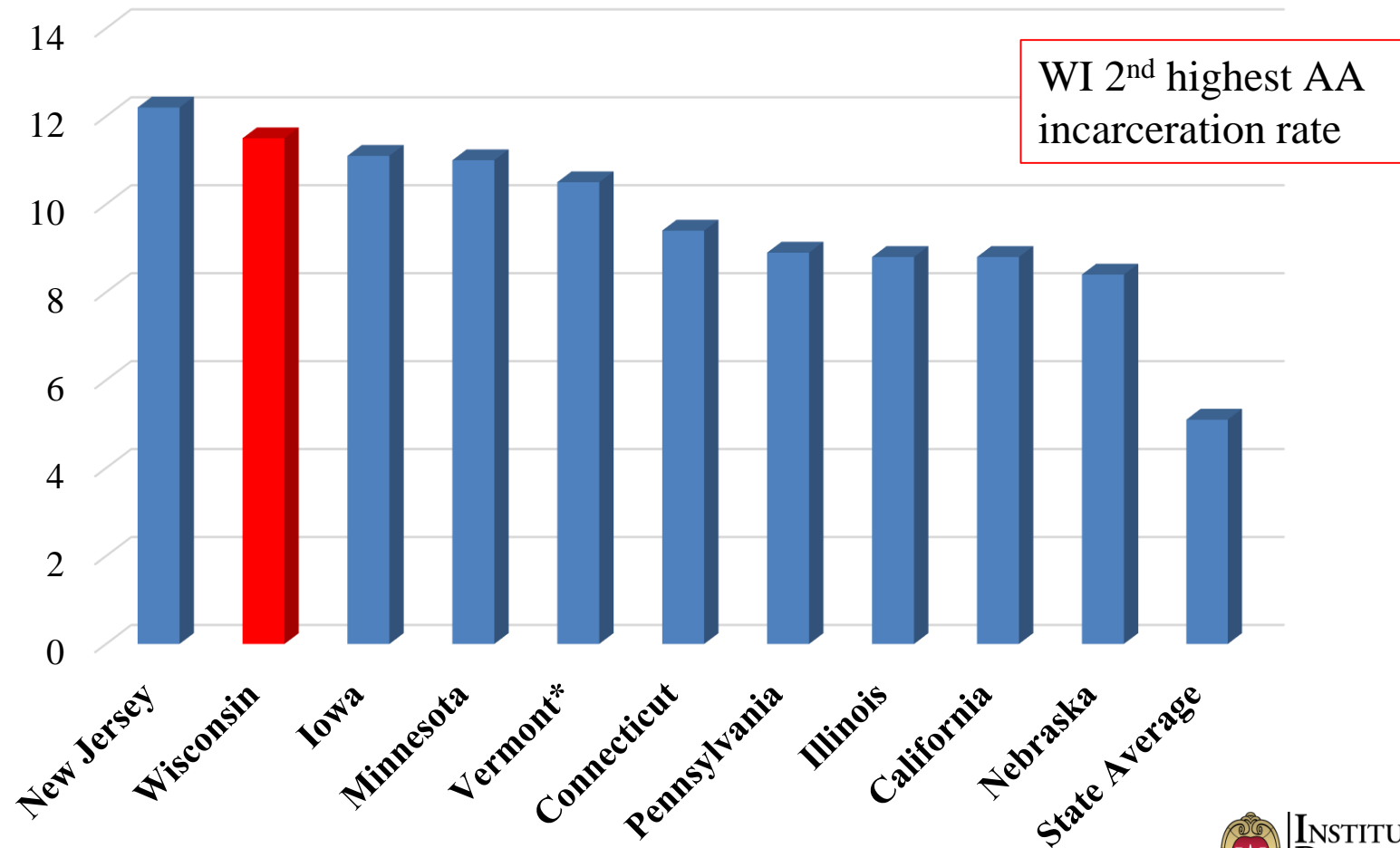


Source: Western and Wildeman 2009.

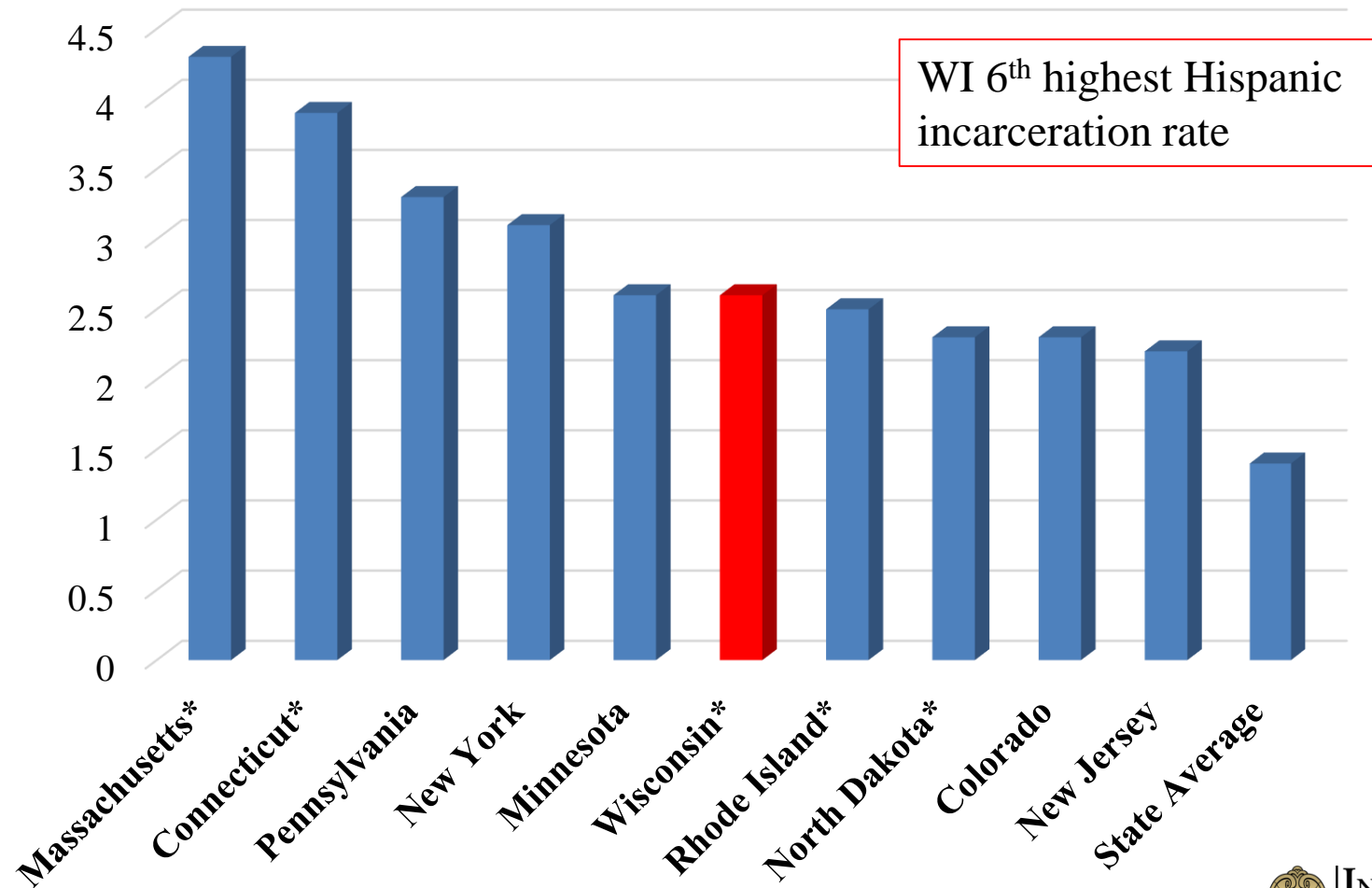
Note: Cumulative risk of imprisonment is the projected lifetime likelihood of imprisonment for a person born in a specific range of years. For more details, see the technical appendix.

THE
HAMILTON
PROJECT
BROOKINGS

Black-White Incarceration Ratios



Hispanic-White Incarceration Ratios



What does this mean for families?

- Economic
 - Lost income during incarceration period
 - Diminished income potential after return
 - Cost of phone calls, transportation to visits
- Social
 - Roles, relationships, parenting
 - Stigma
- Emotional
 - Feelings of family members toward those incarcerated
 - Trauma

What does this mean for kids?

- Children with incarcerated parents experience 2 times the likelihood of developing problems than other children, including:
 - Behavior problems and aggression
 - School problems: cognitive and academic difficulties, truancy
 - Mental health problems: anxiety, depression
- Also more likely to experience:
 - Infant mortality
 - Homelessness
 - Health risk behaviors
 - Long-term health problems

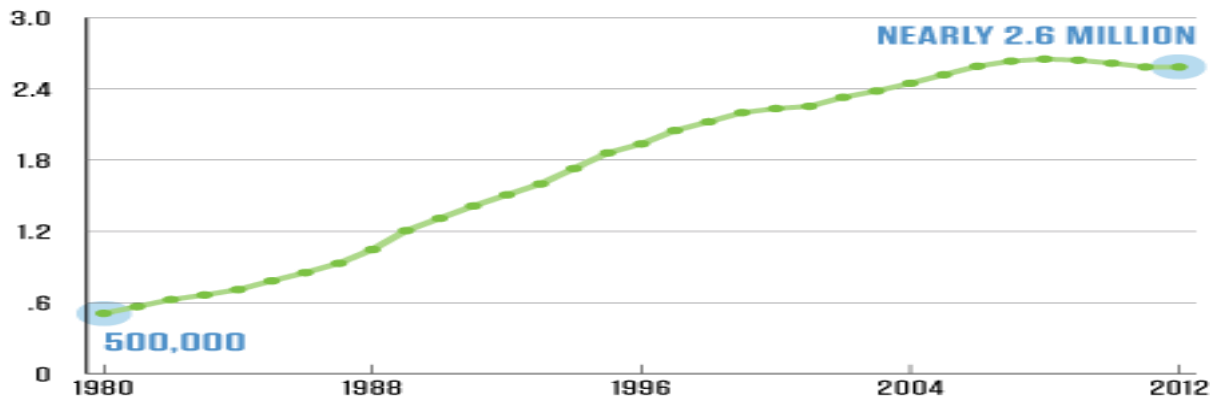
Why?

- Some risk factors may occur even prior to having an incarcerated parent
 - Income poverty and material hardship
 - Parental substance use/abuse
 - Parental criminality
 - Parental mental health issues
- Direct effects of parental incarceration
 - Separation from parent
 - Exposure to corrections settings (e.g., visits)
 - Uncertainty or ambiguous loss
 - Trauma caused by witnessing arrest

How many kids have incarcerated parents?

THE NUMBER OF U.S. CHILDREN WITH AN INCARCERATED PARENT GREW FIVE TIMES FROM 1980 TO 2012.

NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER 18 (IN MILLIONS)



1 in 25
U.S. CHILDREN HAD
A PARENT BEHIND
BARS IN 2012.

**A MAJORITY OF
U.S. PRISONERS
HAVE MINOR
CHILDREN.**

Source: Bryan Sykes and Becky Pettit, "Mass Incarceration, Family Complexity, and the Reproduction of Childhood Disadvantage," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 654, no. 1 (2014): 127-49.

Who are these kids?

PARENTAL INCARCERATION

More than 5 million U.S. children have an incarcerated parent.



1 in 8
POOR
CHILDREN



1 in 9
BLACK
CHILDREN



1 in 14
ALL
CHILDREN

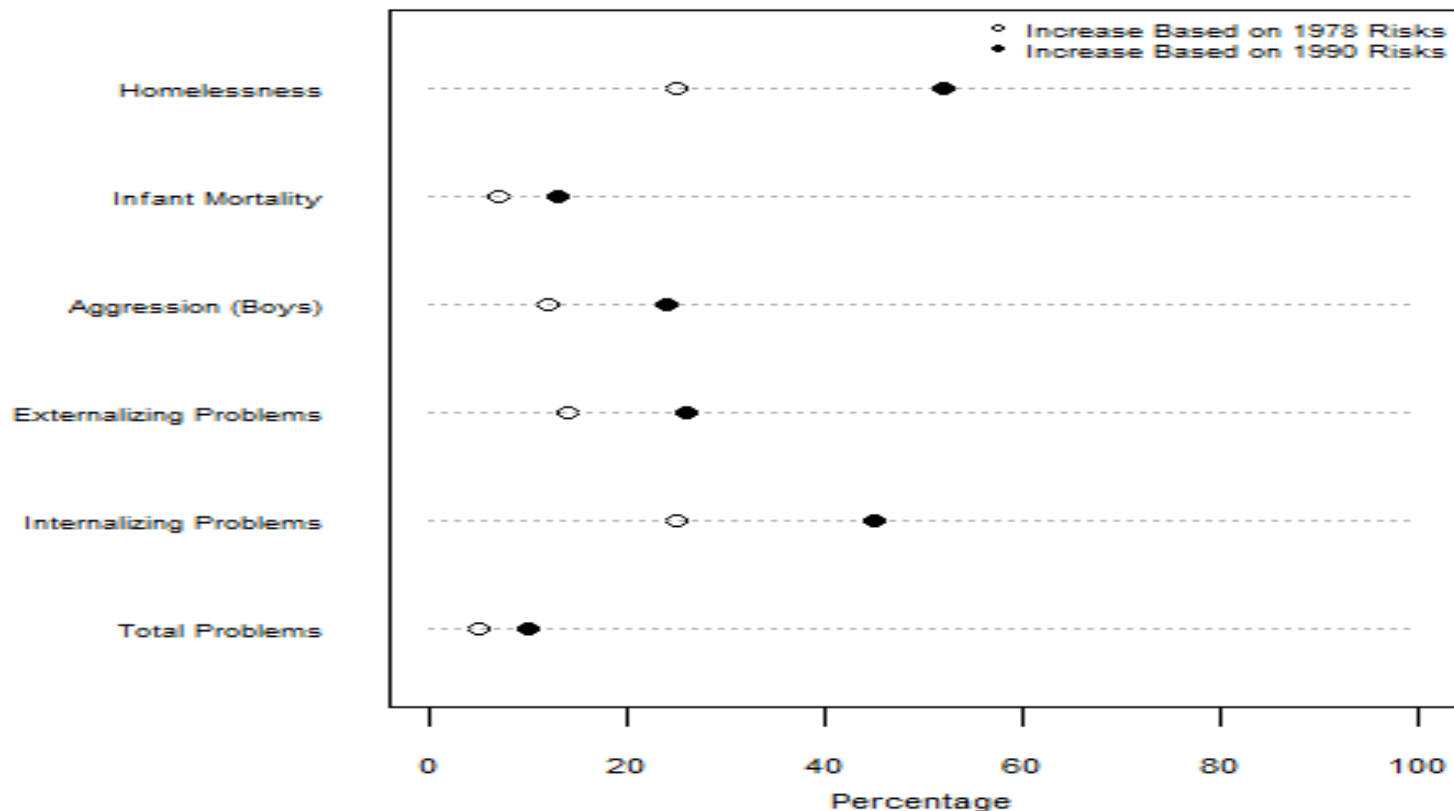
SOURCE: Child Trends' analysis of the National Survey of Children's Health

Janet Loehrke, USA TODAY



Contributes to Racial Disparities in Child Well-Being

Figure 7.5: Initial Estimates of Increase in Black-White Disparities in Child Wellbeing Due to Incarceration



Source: Authors' calculations

Incarceration Research

Era I: *Crime Control*

- The deterrent and incapacitation effects of prison.
(Levitt 1996; Buonanno and Raphael 2013; Johnson and Raphael 2012; Marvell and Moody 1994; Piehl and DiIulio 1995)

Era II: *Collateral Consequences*

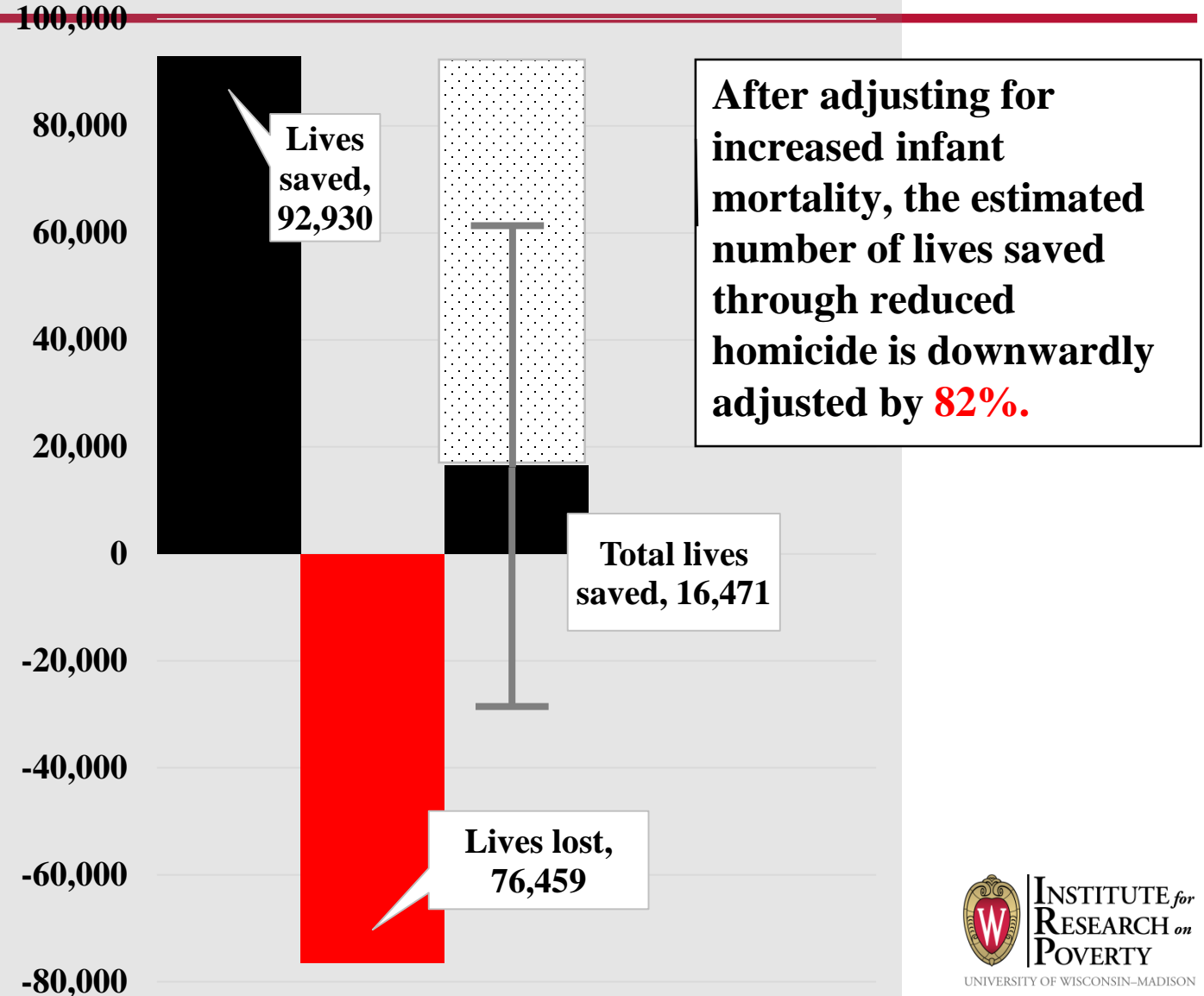
- **Labor market penalties** (Pager 2003; Western 2006)
- **Decreased health** (Massoglia 2008; Porter 2014)
- **Reduced political participation** (Manza and Uggen 2006)
- **Health and behavioral consequences for children** (Wakefield and Wildeman 2014)

Era I

Era II



The Incarceration Ledger



What does this mean for communities?

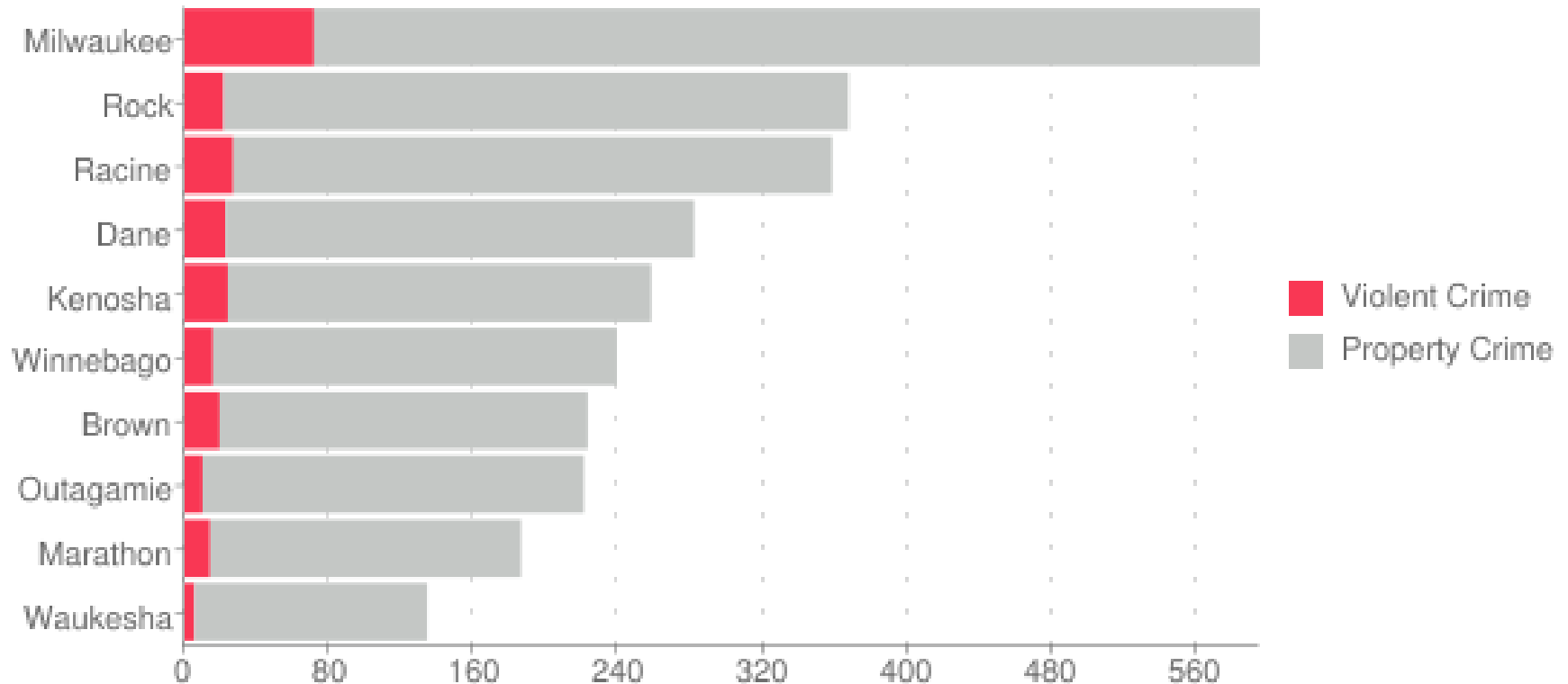
- Families and children affected by incarceration disproportionately live in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods
- These high poverty neighborhoods lack:
 - Quality affordable housing
 - Access to good jobs
 - Good Schools
 - Other key resources
- Disadvantaged across multiple areas:
 - Often reciprocal and mutually re-enforcing
 - Cycle of poverty across generations

Milwaukee

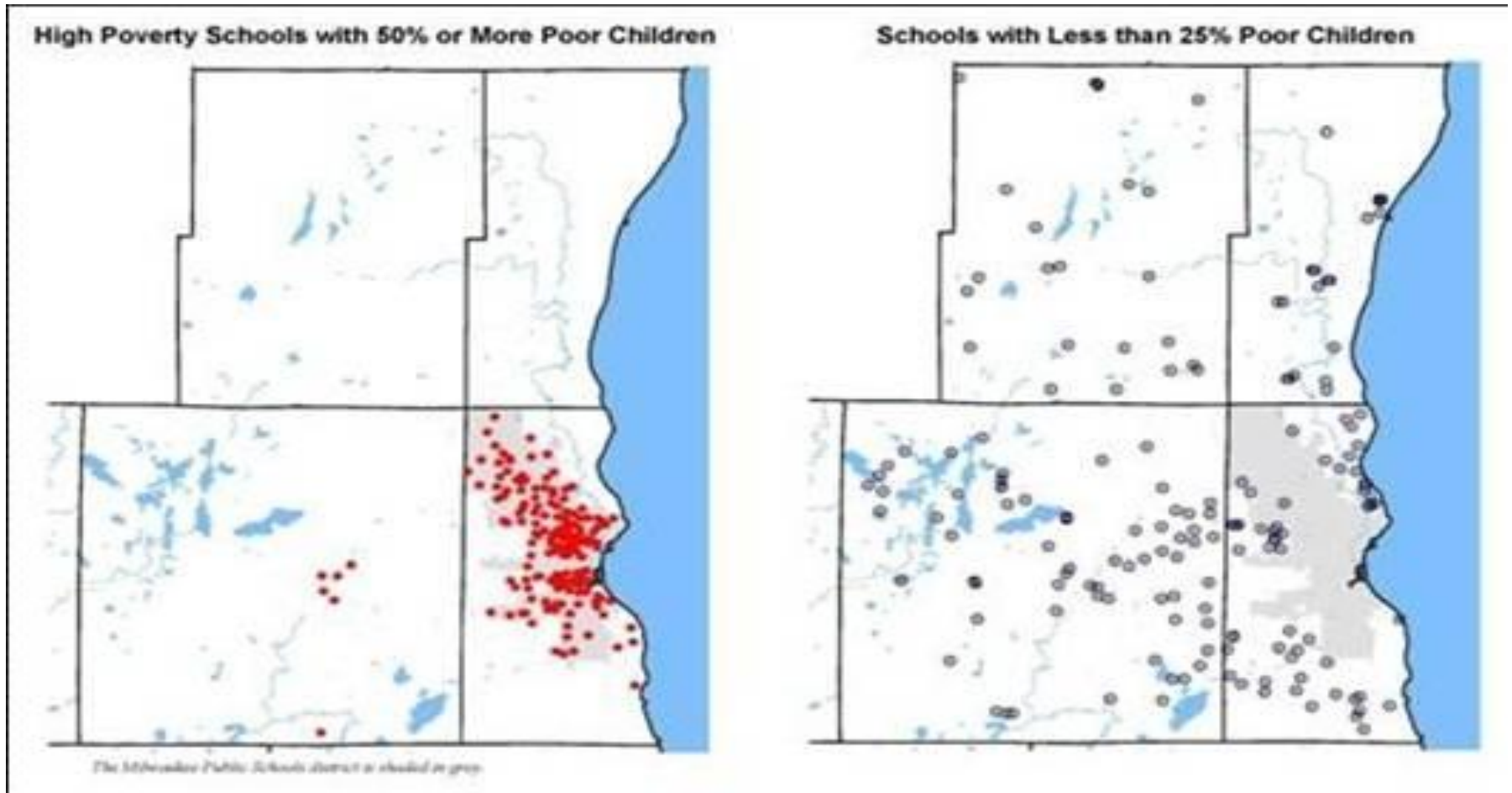
- Often considered “most” segregated major county in U.S.
- Comparatively high crime rates
- The most disadvantaged neighborhoods:
 - Have high numbers of incarcerated individuals
 - “Receive” high number of released inmates

Milwaukee: Crime

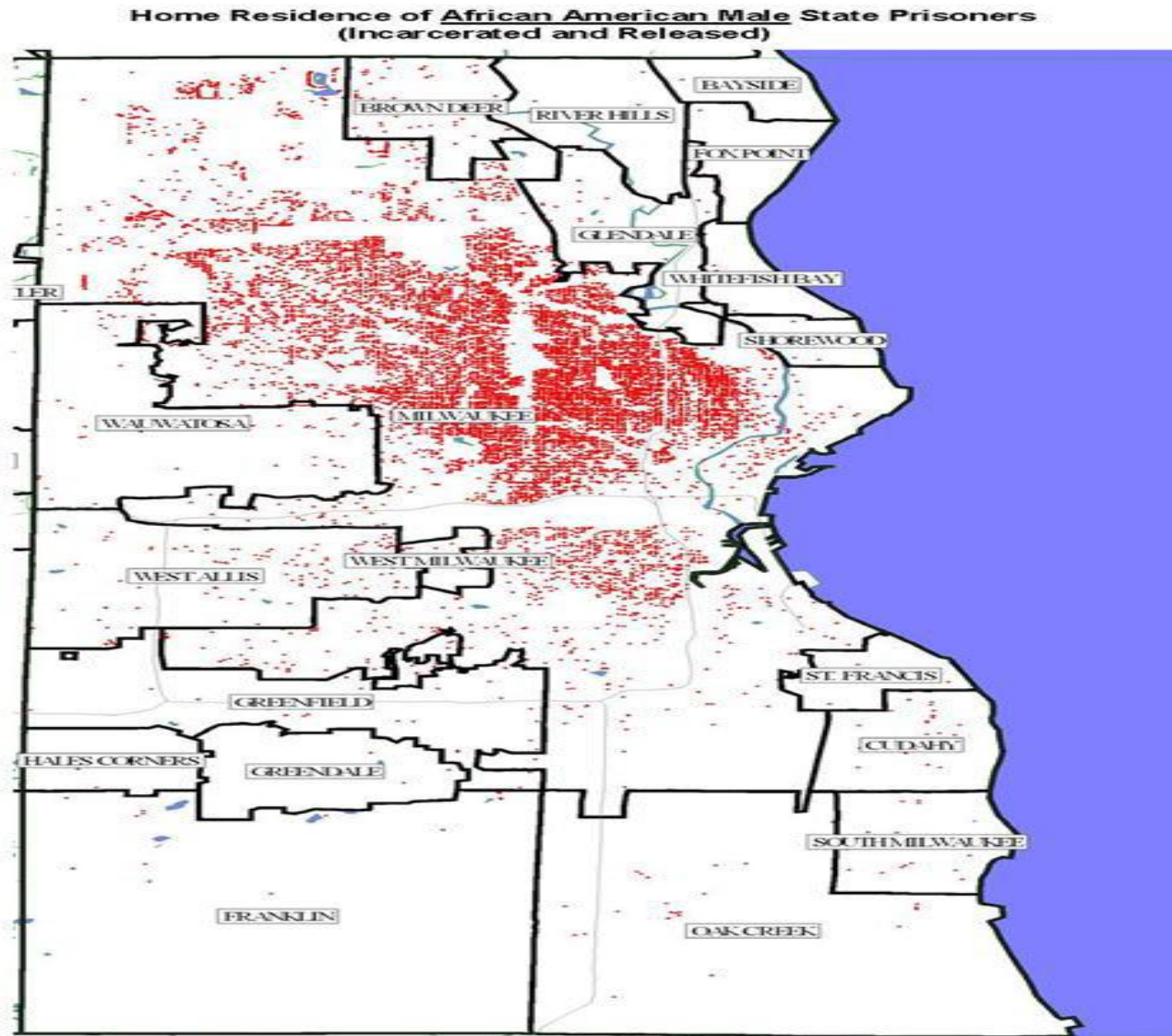
Crime rates per 1,000 population in counties like
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin (1999-2008)



Milwaukee: Poverty



Home Residence: African American Male State Prisoners



An Example: Zip Code 53206

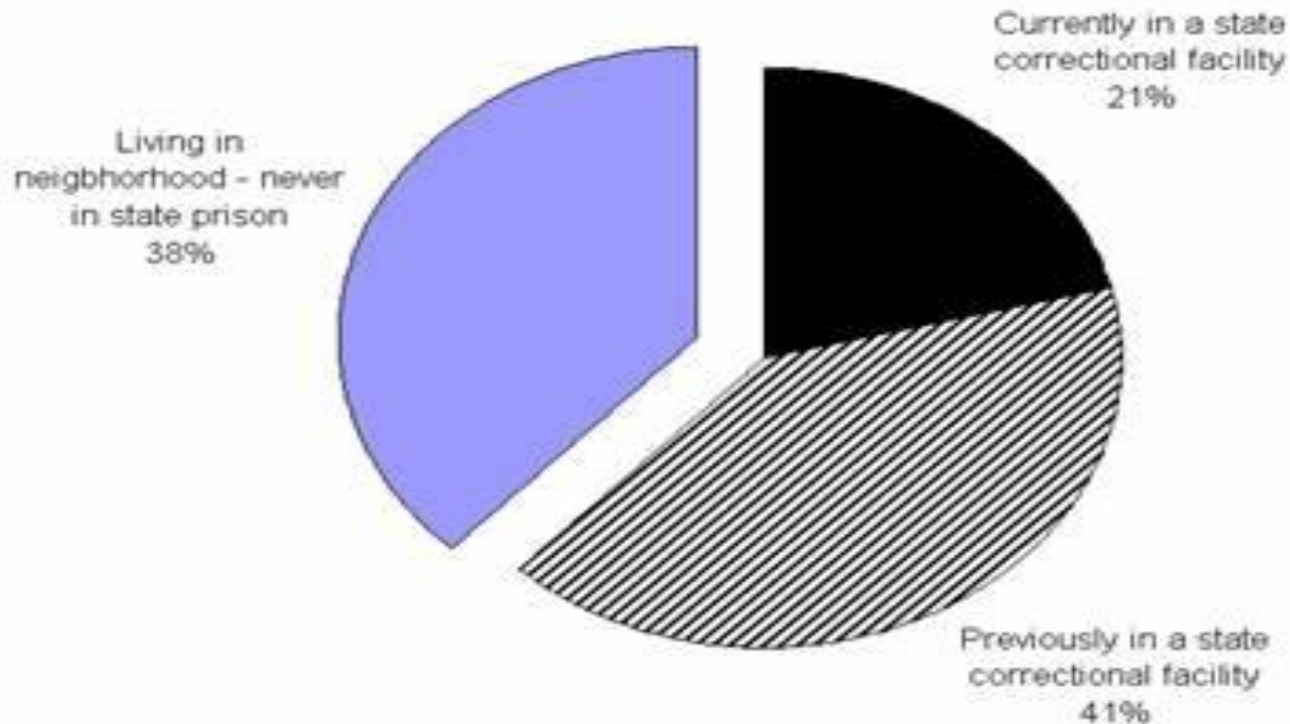
- Milwaukee's poorest zip
- \$20,260 annual income
- 20+ percent of all foreclosures
- Median listing price: \$4,300

<http://www.movoto.com/wi/53206/>

Prison Status: 53206

Prison Status of Men Ages 30-34: Milwaukee Zipcode 53206

Chart Title



Concentration: 53206

Concentration of Released and Incarcerated Ex-Offenders in Milwaukee Zipcode 53206



Concluding Thoughts

- Connected and re-enforcing:
 - By weakening families, communities are weakened
 - By weakening communities, it is harder for families to overcome challenges of incarceration
- This situation creates challenges for kids and is important to consider in relation to child welfare policy and practice

General Outline

- Context Setting
 - Growth and Scope of Penal System
 - Effects on Families
 - Effects on Kids
 - Effects on Communities
- Analysis: Interactions with Child Welfare
- Discussion

Families at the Intersection of the Criminal Justice and Child Protective Services Systems

- Involvement in criminal justice and CPS systems is relatively common and consequential for parents, children, and families; involvement in one may be associated with subsequent involvement in the other
- Little research on the extent to which individuals and families are sequentially or simultaneously involved in both systems
- We use longitudinal linked administrative data drawn to examine overlap*

* Analyses completed by Lonnie Berger, Maria Cancian, Laura Cuesta, and Jennifer Noyes; funded in part by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families.

Our Work

- Describes the incidence and prevalence of both incarceration and CPS involvement in the United States (will skip today)
- Outlines the potential reasons that the same individuals and families may be at risk for involvement in both systems and review the limited existing research examining links between incarceration and CPS involvement
- Calculates inter-generational and intra-generational overlap in the two systems in WI between 2004 and 2012:
 1. the proportion of CPS-involved children with an incarcerated parent
 2. the proportion of incarcerated adults with a CPS-involved child
 3. the proportion of CPS-involved adolescents who subsequently became incarcerated
 4. the proportion of incarcerated young men and women who were involved in the CPS system as adolescents

Why might there be an inter-generational link between incarceration and CPS involvement? (1 of 3)

- Parents may become incarcerated for engaging in child abuse or neglect that constitutes criminal behavior
 - Appears to be relatively rare
- Children whose parents – particularly mothers – become incarcerated may be taken into custody by CPS if another adequate caregiver has not been arranged prior to the parent's incarceration
 - The limited available evidence suggests that this occurs

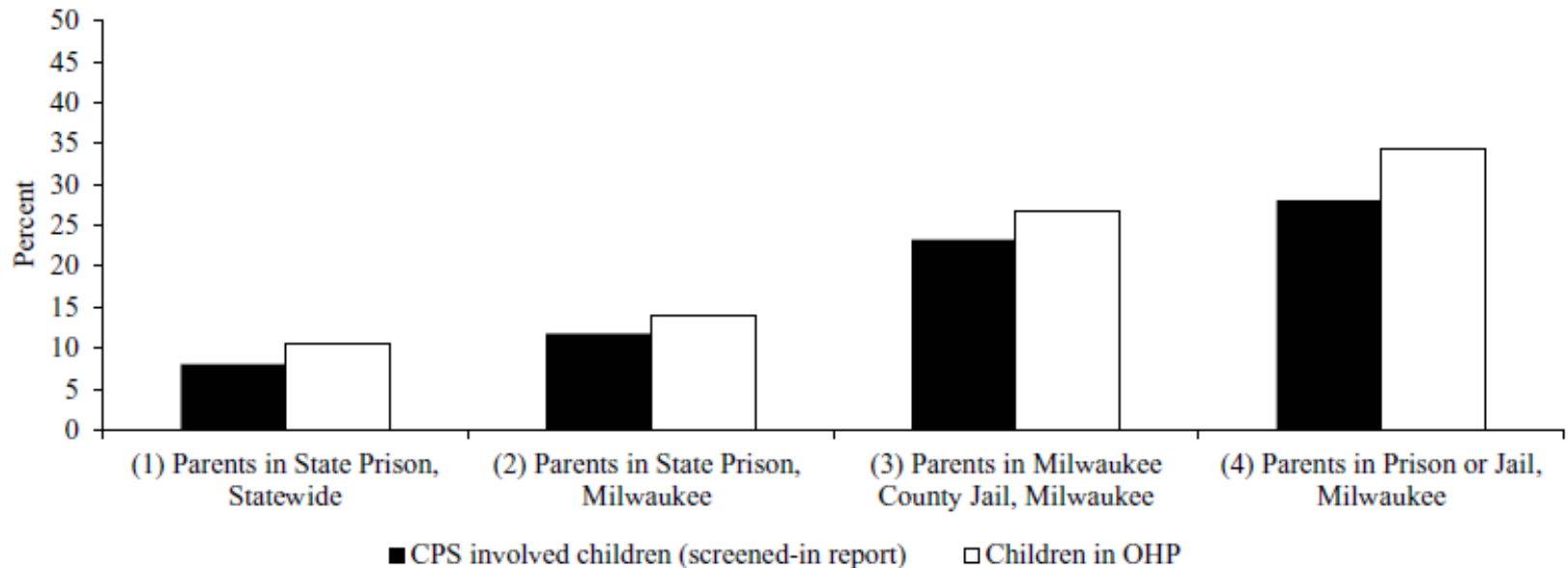
Why might there be an inter-generational link between incarceration and CPS involvement? (2 of 3)

- There may be social selection such that the same types of parents who are likely to become incarcerated are also likely to be involved with CPS for suspected or confirmed child maltreatment, independent of being incarcerated
 - Evidence suggests this to be the case
- Parental incarceration may lead to poorer quality parenting and caregiving environments and, thereby, child maltreatment and CPS involvement
 - The limited available evidence suggests that this occurs

Why might there be an inter-generational link between incarceration and CPS involvement? (3 of 3)

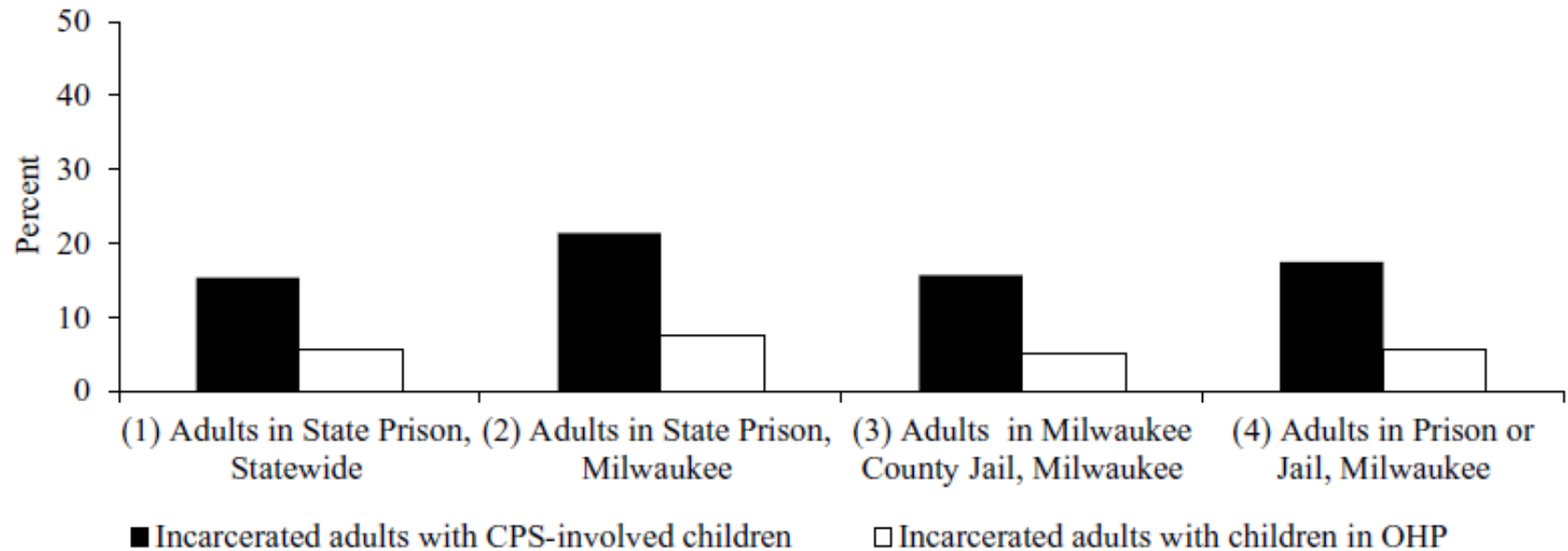
- Experiencing child maltreatment (and subsequent CPS involvement) is associated with a range of social and emotional problems that may place adolescents at greater risk of engaging in delinquent or criminal behavior
 - Evidence supports this contention
- There may be social selection such that the same types of adolescents who are likely to have been involved in CPS are also likely to engage in delinquent or criminal behavior, independent of CPS involvement
 - Evidence suggests this to be the case

FIGURE 1
Proportion of CPS-Involved Children with Incarcerated Parents, State of Wisconsin and Milwaukee County, 2004–2012



- 28% of CPS-involved children and 34% of children in out-of-home placement (OHP) in Milwaukee County in a given year have an incarcerated parent (jail or prison) in that calendar year
- Overlap is greatest vis-à-vis fathers and for black children (not shown)

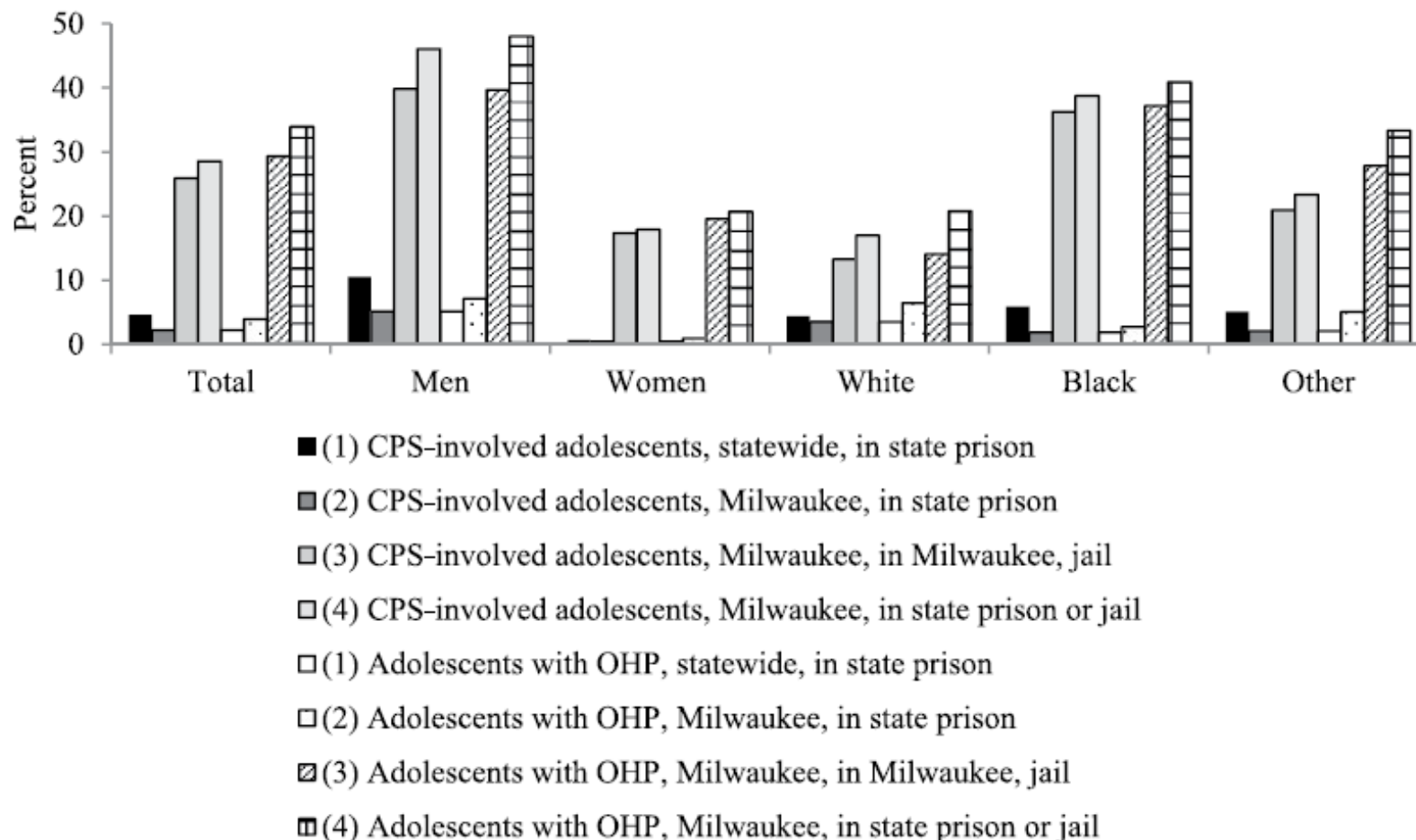
FIGURE 3
Proportion of Incarcerated Adults with CPS-Involved Children, State of Wisconsin and Milwaukee County, 2004–2012



- 18% of incarcerated (jail or prison) adults in Milwaukee County have CPS-involved children and 6% have a child in OHP in that calendar year
- Incarcerated mothers and black adults are particularly likely to have CPS-involved children (not shown)

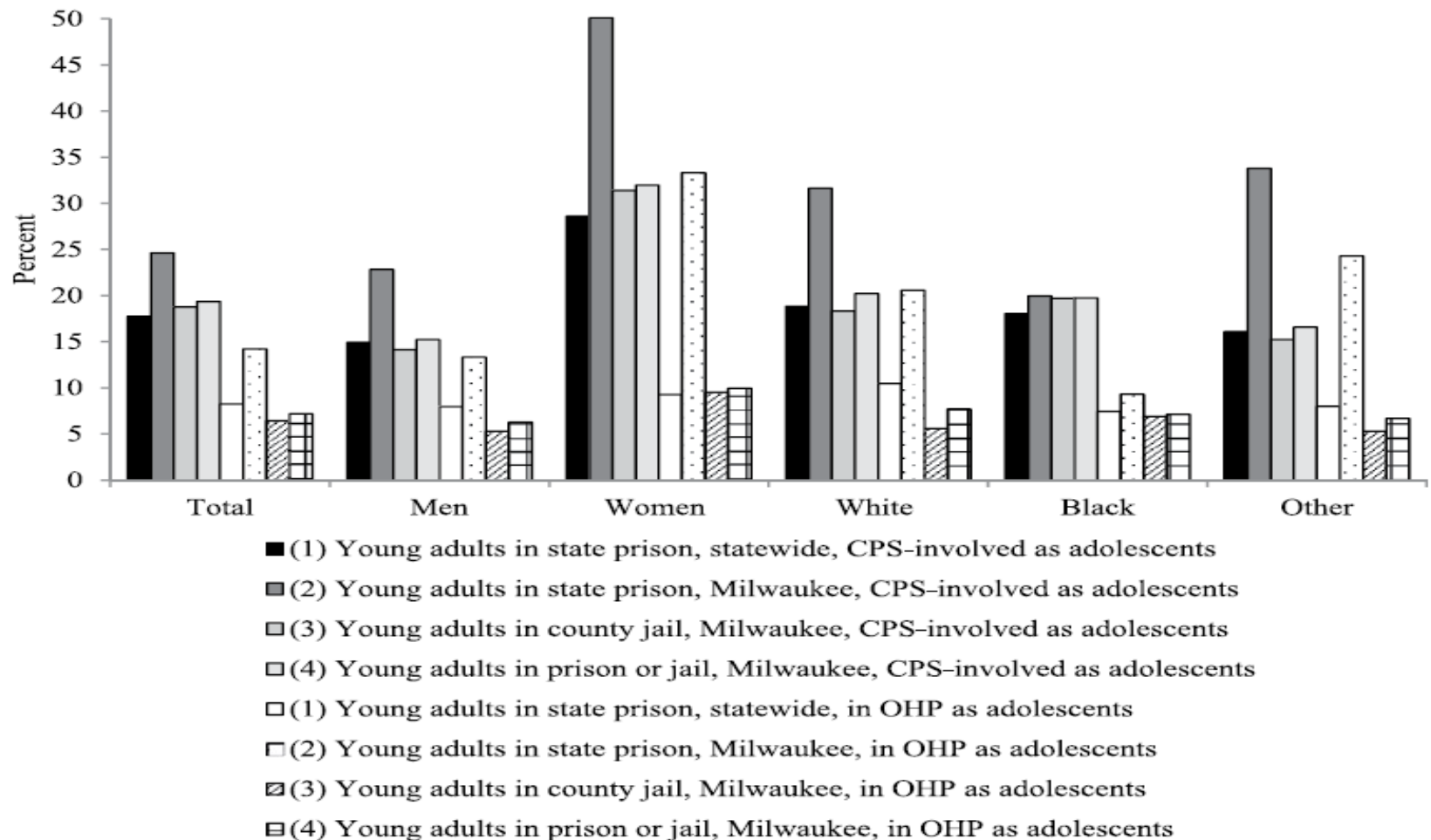
FIGURE 5

Proportion of CPS-Involved Adolescents (Ages 15–16 in 2004–2007) Who Were Incarcerated as Young Adults (Ages 18–21 in 2007–2012), State of Wisconsin and Milwaukee County



- 29% of CPS-involved adolescents and 34% of adolescents in OHP in Milwaukee County were incarcerated (jail or prison) as young adults; overlap is particularly high for men and black individuals

FIGURE 6
Proportion of Incarcerated Young Adults (Ages 18–21 in 2007–2012) Who Were
CPS Involved as Adolescents (Ages 15–16 in 2004–2007), State of Wisconsin
and Milwaukee County, 2004–2012



- 19% of incarcerated (jail or prison) Milwaukee County young adults were CPS-involved as adolescents 7% were in OHP; overlap is particularly high for women

Implications for Policy and Practice (1 of 2)

- CPS policies and practice should carefully consider the special needs of children with incarcerated parents including their family situations before, during, and after incarceration (recognizing that this is a diverse group)
- Parental gender and whether the parent is the child's primary or sole caretaker should be given particular weight; children whose mothers are incarcerated are particularly likely to become involved with CPS and may have more intensive needs than those with incarcerated fathers

Implications for Policy and Practice (2 of 2)

- The high degree of overlap between adolescent CPS involvement and young adult incarceration—particularly for women—suggests that such adolescents are at particularly high risk for future incarceration and may require specialized and intensive preventive efforts

A Final Note

We focus only on overlap between incarceration and CPS involvement, but other aspects of the criminal justice system, including arrest, criminal history, probation, and parole may also overlap with CPS involvement in a range of ways

General Outline

- Context Setting
 - Growth and Scope of Penal System
 - Effects on Families
 - Effects on Kids
 - Effects on Communities
- Analysis: Interactions with Child Welfare
- Discussion

Contact Information

Lonnie Berger

lmberger@wisc.edu

Mike Light

mlight@ssc.wisc.edu